

February 9, 2009

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
U.S. Capitol
Office H-232
Washington, DC 20515-6501

The Honorable John A. Boehner
House Minority Leader
U.S. Capitol
Office H-204
Washington, DC 20515-5117

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Minority Leader Boehner:

The undersigned members representing the ocean research, education, Earth observations and conservation communities, and commercial enterprises would like to thank you for your continuing strong support of ocean science, Earth observation systems, and conservation in the U.S. House of Representatives. We encourage you to bring to the floor for consideration S. 22--The Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009. S. 22 contains five landmark ocean bills: The Ocean Exploration and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Undersea Research Program Act; The Ocean and Coastal Mapping Integration Act; The Integrated Coastal and Ocean Observation System Act; The Federal Ocean Acidification Research and Monitoring Act; and The Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program.

These are bipartisan bills that passed the House of Representatives in the 110th Congress under your leadership and now await floor action in your chamber. Collectively, these bills will fuel exploration of the oceans, improve ocean mapping, help us understand the effects of greenhouse gases and ocean acidification on marine ecosystems, and create an integrated ocean observing system (IOOS) that will monitor and forecast ocean conditions, including the physical, biological and chemical components of coastal waters. The increased understanding of ocean, coastal and Great Lakes ecosystems, that will be gained by implementing these critical pieces of legislation will improve marine resource conservation and management, help us develop resilient coastal communities, spur economic growth and commercial enterprises, and improve national security.

These ocean bills are consistent with the recommendations of both the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy and the Pew Oceans Commission and will promote both conservation and sustainable use. The U.S. EEZ is the largest in the world, containing over 3.4 million square nautical miles of ocean- larger than the land area of all 50 states combined. More than 50 percent of the U.S. population lives in coastal counties, making these regions vital contributors to our economy, quality of life and national security. With an ever-changing climate, increasing risks from natural hazards, declining fisheries and reduced water quality, we need the tools to protect and manage our ocean assets and better understand how ocean and coastal ecosystems respond to natural and human-related hazards.

We hope you will once again demonstrate your continued commitment to strengthening our Nation's understanding and conservation of the oceans through timely House consideration and passage of these measures.

Sincerely,

Alaska Ocean Observing System
Battelle
Caribbean Regional Association

Alliance for Earth Observations
Bigelow Laboratory for Ocean Sciences
Central and Northern California Ocean

	Observing System
Columbia University	College of Marine Science--University of South Florida
Consortium for Ocean Leadership	Dalhousie University
Dauphin Island Sea Lab	Duke University Marine Lab
East Carolina University	East Coast Shellfish Growers Association
Florida Coastal Ocean Observing System Consortium	Florida State University
Fugro Earth Data, Inc	Great Lakes Commission
Great Lakes Observing System Regional Association	Great Lakes WATER Institute
Gulf of Maine Ocean Observing System	Gulf of Mexico Ocean Observing System
Gulf of Mexico Consortium	Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institution at Florida Atlantic University
Harte Research Institute for Gulf of Mexico Studies	Institute of Marine and Coastal Sciences at Rutgers University
International SeaKeepers Society	Joint Ocean Commission Initiative
Louisiana State University	Louisiana Universities Marine Consortium
L-3 Communications, MariPro Inc.	Marine Advanced Technology Education (MATE) Center
Marine Conservation Biology Institute	Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Mid Atlantic Coastal Ocean Observing Regional Associations	Mississippi State University
Moss Landing Marine Lab	National Association of Marine Laboratories
National Federation of Regional Associations for Coastal and Ocean Observing	National Estuarine Research Reserve Association
National Marine Sanctuary Foundation	New Hampshire Sea Grant College Program
North Carolina Sea Grant Program	North Carolina State University, Center for Marine Sciences and Technology
Northwest Alliance of Networked Ocean Observing Systems	North East Regional Association of Coastal Ocean Observing Systems
Nova Southeastern University Oceanographic Center	Ocean Conservancy
Old Dominion University	Oregon State University

Pacific Islands Ocean Observing System	Pennsylvania State University
San Francisco State University, Romberg Tiburon Center	Scripps Institution of Oceanography
Sea Grant Association	Stanford University
Southeastern Universities Research Association	Restore America's Estuaries
Southern California Coastal Ocean Observing System	South East Coastal Ocean Observing Regional Association
South Carolina Marine Sciences Consortium	South Carolina Sea Grant Consortium
Skidaway Institute of Oceanography	Stony Brook University
Teledyne RD Instruments, Inc.	Texas A&M University--main campus College Station
Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi	The Alliance for Earth Observations
The Campaign for Environmental Literacy	The Nature Conservancy
The Ocean Foundation	United Fishermen's Marketing Association
University Corporation for Atmospheric Research	University of California, Santa Cruz, Institute of Marine Sciences
University of California, Los Angeles, Institute of the Environment	University of Delaware
University of Hawaii School of Ocean & Earth Science & Technology	University of Florida
University of Miami	University of Maine School of Marine Sciences
University of Massachusetts School of Marine Sciences	University of Michigan
University of New Hampshire Marine Program	University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
University of North Carolina at Wilmington	University of Rhode Island
University of Southern Mississippi	US Arctic Research Commission
Virginia Institute of Marine Science	Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution